

Northamptonshire Local Access Forum held on Thursday 3rd September 2020, Via Skype

Minutes of meeting

Members in attendance

Bob Entwistle - BE

Chris Shaw - CS

Officers in attendance

Leon Jolly - LJ

Jacqui Williams - JW

Apologies

John Shenfield (Chair)

Chris Glasspool

Steve Fowler

Paul Henson

Cllr Jason Smithers

Matt Hammon

Number	Notes	Actions	Action deadline
1.	Welcome and Apologies – JS: LJ welcomed all to the meeting and offered apologies on behalf of John Shenfield and Chris Glasspool. It was noted that the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Environment & Place was not in attendance and neither were any other representative from NCC.	Note	N/A
2.	Review of Minutes of Last Meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting were not reviewed.	Note	N/A
3.	Standing Orders of Business – LJ: Review of Issues: One diversion noted on the network at Ashton (Oundle). LJ to forward map and diversion order to JW for further circulation to NLAF members. Subsequent to the meeting it was ascertained that the order has not been certified and is not yet in force.	LJ / JW	Next meeting
3	BE advised that he had raised four issues with Area 2 that were not satisfactorily dealt with. JW to raise with Officer concerned.	JW	Next meeting
3	LJ to consider the possibility of arranging a meeting between Ben Wright and the Ramblers.	LJ	Next meeting

Number	Notes	Actions	Action deadline
	<p>Forward Plan of RoW: It was agreed that any SAFETY issues that are raised on the network to also be reported to JW. Dates of future NLAf meetings to be decided. It was agreed that JW would consult with Cllr Smithers to ascertain a suitable date in December and would arrange the next meeting accordingly.</p>	All	Next meeting
3	<p>NLAf members expressed their delight that the RoWIP had been approved at Cabinet level but expressed concern that it was not yet published on the NCC website. LJ and JW confirmed that the RoWIP has been forwarded to NCC for publishing and efforts are being made to ensure</p>	JW	Next Meeting
3	<p>It was confirmed that there are currently no plans to circulate printed copies of the RoWIP, however, Northamptonshire Highways may be open to self-printing copies for distribution to NLAf members. JW to ascertain numbers and discuss with LJ.</p>	JW	Next Meeting
3	<p>JW to forward a copy of the Cabinet-approved RoWIP to RoW Officers, Area Managers and Assistant Area Managers</p>	JW	Next Meeting
3	<p>Membership Issues: JW advised that membership forms were last completed in 2017 and are therefore due to be renewed. It was suggested that representatives from the Canal & River Trust, Farmers Union and other appropriate groups be sought.</p>	JW/LJ	Next meeting
3	<p>It was further advised that the position of Chairperson is up for renewal, as is the currently inactive Vice-Chairperson post. All were reminded that current incumbents cannot stand for re-election. Following discussion it was agreed that arrangements for a blind-vote for both positions will be circulated to members by the start of October 2020.</p>	JW	Next Meeting

Number	Notes	Actions	Action deadline
3	<p>CS requested that a review of attendees to NLA members since February 2019 be undertaken to ensure members are meeting their obligations.</p> <p>It was agreed that copies of the minutes will be sent to other local authorities within Northamptonshire.</p> <p>LJ and JW to meet and discuss arrangements for the annual report.</p>	JW	Next meeting
4.	<p>Presentation on Local Issues – LJ: LJ provided an overview and update of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transition to unitary status and the formation of North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire councils. It was confirmed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West Northamptonshire will come into existence on 1st April 2021 - No start date for North Northamptonshire as yet - Chief Executives for both new organisations have been appointed - The Highways Maintenance contract may be split in to two to mirror the new authorities - Soft market testing for the procurement of the new Highways contracts is ongoing. The OJEU Notice is due to be submitted in October 2020 - It is believed that Design and Strategic disciplines will be split - It is believed that the RoWIP will be reviewed by each authority individually. <p>LJ confirmed that a budget had been allocated for the repair of Chester Farm Bridge, design signed off and consents obtained. It is anticipated that the scheme will commence Feb / Mar 2021. The meeting was pleased to note that the situation with regard to the bridges at Chester Farm was coming to a satisfactory conclusion</p> <p>LJ provided an update from each Area and from the Structures Team (attached).</p>	Note	N/A
5.	Forward Plan – All:	Note	N/A

Number	Notes	Actions	Action deadline
	The future of the Local Access Forum was discussed, as detailed above but a more comprehensive discussion will be on the agenda for the next meeting.		
6.	AOB – All: It was agreed that a ‘test-run’ Skype meeting be arranged prior to the next formal NLAF meeting to ensure all members can access and use Skype.	JW	N/A
	CS advised that he was unhappy with some of the responses received following a submission of issues via Street Doctor. JW to forward the PEMs to LJ for further investigation.	JW/LJ	N/A
N/A	<p style="text-align: center;">Next meeting: Thursday 10th December 2020 1900 – 2100hrs This meeting will be held via SKYPE.</p>	N/A	N/A

Chester House Bridge

Notes courtesy of Chris Shaw, 18th February 2020.

Exchange of correspondence over the last couple of months between Northamptonshire Area Ramblers Footpath Secretary (Will Lovell) and LGSS Law (acting on behalf of the County Council)

Our letter (in the form of an email) of 29 January replies to the advice given to the solicitor which makes reference to crossing or walking alongside the A45 (neither safe nor convenient) to gain access to Chester House Farm as an alternative. It is worth noting that the A45 carries approximately 57,000 vehicles day with average speeds of between 60mph and 70mph. Other ways of pedestrian access to Chester Farm House have been referred to but in one or two cases making use of unadopted footpaths from the Embankment in Wellingborough beyond the Business Park and Claudia Way.

Reference in the exchange of correspondence is made to the use of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and there appears to be a difference of opinion how certain sections of the Act have been applied or interpreted relating to the closure of the Bridge.

What is welcoming though is that the authority “has confirmed that the bridges will be replaced” in the next financial year (2020/2021) and they will form part of the ROW action plan. The meeting confirmed that £200,000 has been allocated for a new bridge.

Nevertheless Northamptonshire Ramblers would be grateful for a legally watertight agreement that the works will be completed.